

Why the Court Of Honor Lifted Ban On the Duelists

So Many Romantic Mixups They Just Have to Be Gotten Out of the Way



The quaint interior of a little restaurant, which is supported entirely by duelists on the popular field of honor closest to Rome.

It positively is dangerous these days for any one to walk around in Italy with a chip on his shoulder or his heart on his sleeve.

Some one is bound to knock the chip off or consider the heart an advance toward his own lady fair, and then there's a duel. Everybody's fighting duels in Italy now.

The extraordinarily large number of them in Rome and throughout the country in the last few months is of particular interest when one considers the cause for the epidemic. This is the action of the army authorities in disbanding the famous "Court of Honor" which governed the dueling situation during the war.

There were practically no duels during the war. The Government established a Court of Honor, which sat throughout the war. It was made up of distinguished army officers, too old or otherwise incapacitated for service.

This board was made necessary by the fact that it seemed for a time as if all the young Italian officers would shoot each other before they got to the front. They had so many love affairs, these impetuous young officers, and so many of them ran into each other bidding good-by to the same girl that duels were unavoidable.

The Court of Honor was organized and the army authorities ordered all would-be duelists to take their troubles before the board. The latter tried to patch the differences up, but if it failed it gave each of the would-be duelists a "clearance of honor," so they could go about their war duties unembarrassed by their not having fought each other. But they just bided their time, all of them—or most of them—and now, the Court of Honor disbanded, they are up in the mornings and at it.

In the early days of battles young Italian noblemen ready to go away to the battle fronts would seek out the fair ladies of their hearts' desires and would plight their troths—troths which had already been plighted by other young Italian noblemen whose affectionate tendencies had swept in the same direction.

It is a fact that all women in all lands in the times of stress and war and great primitive situations are rather weak in affairs of the heart and like to send admirers away in happiness as great as lies in their power to bestow, being confident that in the era of calm which is to follow all can be adjusted without great difficulty.

So it was in Italy. Many a beautiful young woman of fair Italy, loved by a score of youths, kissed each of them farewell, knowing in her heart that it was deceit to send them away with the illusion in each mind that that one, and only that one, was her choice, but believing, nevertheless, that each deserved whatever comfort could be given them by any means.

Many a young officer planted a proprietary kiss upon the lips of some radiant young Italian noblewoman—lips upon which another youth had planted another plighting seal impression and upon which still another was to press his lips under an identical illusion.

And so the seeds were sown for hundreds of peace time duels. Now peace prevails and it is harvest time on the field of honor.

The Court of Honor, which was so effective in stowing away disagreements between persons during the war, has lost its moral support. The Italian code of ethics countenances the duel and there is now no ground for an appeal to patriotism as an intervention. Therefore, the Court of Honor does not function now. Hence the great number of contests on the dueling ground. Hence the hundreds of affairs of

honor over which all Italy becomes excited.

Prominent men fight duels, and the reason quite often is some lovely woman's favor. Counts and Dukes draw their swords in the fulfillment of prearranged conflicts, and one or the other of each dueling pair sometimes is carried or helped from the field.

It is quite well known that the daughter of an Italian Duke has been the inspiration for six duels within the last four months. And the explanation is that she was tender hearted in the presence of a uniform of the army or the navy. It is the general belief that she may soon become the wife of one of her admirers. Unless she does it is the impression that much more blood will be spilled.

A most interesting commentary upon the situation is that a cafe or little restaurant maintained near the most popular dueling grounds just outside of Rome earns handsome profits for its proprietor. And his rapidly increasing fortune is due solely to the custom of duelists and those who come out to the grounds as spectators, when prominent statesmen, leading artists and journalists, noblemen—representatives of all professions and all walks of life—are settling their differences with the sword.

A recent duel between Romans prominent in society was that in which Duke Marino Torlonia and the sculptor, Count Philip Lovatelli, fought. The sculptor had made a bust of the Duke's wife, formerly Miss Elsie Moore of New York.

After the bust had been made the Duke changed his mind about accepting it and sent it back to the sculptor with a check for 1,000 lire as payment for his labor, excusing himself for the smallness of the sum with the explanation that the exchange rate was unfavorable. Lovatelli at once put the rejected bust in a conspicuous place in his salon, decorating it with a little placard reading:

"Owing to unfavorable exchange, my art is worth only fifty dollars."

Later the sculptor is said to have told the Duke:

"If your wife paid millions for a Duke

she could at least afford a few thousand lire for a statue of herself."

The affair came to a crisis when Torlonia slapped Lovatelli's face at the Anglo-American charity ball—a great social event. The next day the duel was fought. They fought bitterly for more than half an hour, their seconds having all they could do to prevent them killing each other. Although the sculptor had an artery in his arm cut and consequently was accounted loser he is not yet wholly satisfied and plans are afoot for another meeting. Incidentally, Pope Pius excommunicated the Duke.

But, as has been said, the greater number of duels fought in Italy now are resultant from the deferment of disagreements practiced by the Court of Honor functioning during the war, and most of the duels are centered about women.

The daughter of the Duke mentioned before discovered as soon as the war ended that she had managed to effect as complicated a situation as any that has ever appeared in fiction.

She had promised so many war bound soldiers that she would marry them that she lost count.

After the war her suitors began to arrive in fairly large numbers to claim her. She handled the situation by confessing that she was in something of a quandary. They set out, most of them, to settle the matter near the little restaurant.

But the fact is that the epidemic which has resulted from the suppression of duels during the war has made dueling so prevalent and so popular that any difference of

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How many years after did I discover that an "audience" inspires and strengthens, and that to "hold an audience" is a gift from God!

At 10 years old I was sent to school at Brighton. Nothing remains in my memory but a dull monotony. Governesses that made me feel shy, learning that I found difficult and the stiffness of school discipline that was miserably dull to my sensitive mind. Walking out two by two had a tragically depressing effect upon me.

I was full of odd fancies, too. I used to amuse myself by putting pennies furtively on curbstones, and making up passionate stories to myself of how beggars would

The Duchess de Torlonia, formerly Miss Elsie Moore of New York.

opinion is likely to be the cause for such a conflict. A duel hanging fire in Rome at present is between two Deputies, Phillipson and Benedetti. Each one of these wanted a profitable post as secretary in a certain corporation. Phillipson wanted the prestige and did not need the money, since he accumulated a great fortune during the war. Benedetti did need the money and he finally secured the post.

Then Phillipson made a public declaration in the parliamentary district to which both Deputies belong that Benedetti did not pay his debts. Thereupon Benedetti pulled Phillipson's nose. A duel is scheduled and doubtless will be held back of the old tower which overlooks the field of honor just outside of Rome—the place where the restaurant is.

Then there was an affair over a question of patriotism, indirectly involving an American woman, formerly Miss Dorothy Deacon of Boston, who was later the Princess Radziwill and who is now the Countess Palffy, wife of a Hungarian nobleman.

Count Palffy two years ago called Prince Odeschalchi, also Hungarian but a member of a well known Italian family, "a traitor to his country."

Prince Odeschalchi openly admitted having offered his services to the Allies, one after another, and finally to America. Also he challenged Count Palffy several times, but for two years the Count declined to

find them there and think God had sent them in answer to their prayers.

I don't remember minding that I was scolded for "lagging behind"—that was the price I paid for my dreams.

I have a sinister remembrance that when I was a child I often thought grown up people silly, and their voices ugly and their movements ungraceful. And when people had beautiful speaking voices or lovely manners I was their slave.

A year or two later wretched terms were spent in a school at Hampstead. The mistress had cold blue eyes that stared at me—whether in admiration or disgust it was difficult for a child to tell. This school mistress either painted or wore false eyebrows, which made her face funny to me. I know I was afraid to look at her—that I would have to laugh, and then she would frighten me. When she took the class and asked me a question, my mind became a blank. I don't remember learning anything at this school or making any school friends.

I remember one of the governesses, who



The former Dorothy Deacon of Boston, later the Princess Radziwill and now the Countess Palffy. She indirectly was the cause of one of the recent Italian duels.



Duke de Torlonia, who was excommunicated by Pope Pius because of his duel with Count Lovatelli, the noted sculptor.

give the Prince an opportunity to fight on the field of honor.

Recently a special court of honor, modeled on the official board which served during the war, comprising several distinguished Romans, sat on this affair. They decided in the first place that the Prince had violated his honor in offering his services to the enemies of his country, but the court decided also that Count Palffy had violated his honor in calling Odeschalchi a traitor for two years without giving him a chance for satisfaction. Both were therefore disqualified to meet on the dueling ground, and that particular combat is off. But there is believed to have been an underlying grievance, and it is not improbable that they are yet to meet.

The most extraordinary series of duels of late years in Italy were those fought by the Nationalist Deputy Mussolini. In some respects they resembled family feuds where the obligation to avenge an affront passed from one member of a family to the next.

The Mussolini affair began directly in a duel over a political difference fought between Gen. Benicvenga, editor of *Il Paese*, the moderate Nitti paper, and the editor of the *Idea Nazionale*, the ardent Nationalist sheet. The two combatants did not like each other's political views, and finally stepped out of their newspaper columns and met in a true Latin spirit on the field of honor. Soon afterward a member of the Fascisti, Lieut. Iglione, who was wounded in the war and wore a medal on his chest, became incensed at remarks made by Francesco Ciccotti, another editor

had said. So Iglione considered him an unworthy antagonist.

At this juncture Benito Mussolini, leader of the Fascisti, wrote a violent letter against Ciccotti, who promptly challenged him to a duel, which Mussolini accepted. Lieut. Iglione and his second, Gino Calza Bini, another Roman Fascisti, were incensed that the head of their organization would accept a duel with Ciccotti when Iglione had refused. "If you fight with this fellow you'll have to satisfy each of us later," they told Mussolini. So Mussolini took on all three duels.

Then the law intervened. The police set out to prevent the Mussolini-Ciccotti duel. The Fascisti leader Mussolini raced to the dueling place by automobile with a police deputy tearing after him on a motorcycle—an idea for a Douglas Fairbanks film plot.

Mussolini, who happened to be a Deputy, protested against this police chaperonage to the Minister of Justice. He asked the amazed official like a defiant small boy: "Are you or are you not going to let me fight this duel?"

The Minister replied that it was strange for a representative of the people to come to him, the upholder of the law, and to demand the right to fight a duel, which violated the penal code. But honor comes before the law in Italy and the duel took place at Livorno. All Rome attended. Socialists, Nationalists and society came by trains, street cars, automobiles and carriages to the scene of carnage. The fight lasted for an hour, when Ciccotti was seized with a heart attack and the physician called a halt. After a tremendous discussion the duel was shifted to a verbal debate before a jury of honor. Rome went home in its street cars, automobiles and carriages.

A bombardment began in the newspapers. There were accusations that Ciccotti had not fought fairly. Then Lieut. Iglione and Calza Bini, his second, reminded him that he had agreed to fight with them. Before he was through the Fascisti leader had fought four duels.

"If," he said later, "I must fight four duels every time I call a man a cad I will be fighting not only an antagonist, but the law of geometric progression."

Dueling in Italy is not a bloodthirsty way of settling differences. It is as formal an act of courtesy as tipping the hat when brushing a man on the street. Duels are rarely fatal. Honor is presumed to be satisfied on the first drawing of blood. Each move in a duel is meticulously defined in the Code of Honor, a large book containing all the regulations for a chivalrous encounter with the nicety of income tax regulations. Seconds with swords in hand stand by to prevent any deviations from the narrow code. At the first puncture of the skin the seconds are required to tap the assailant on the right wrist and call off the duel.

The Girl Who Became a Nation's Beloved Beauty

Continued from preceding page.

fondly interested in the working of a newly invented steam saw for cutting down trees.

And there was an awful day when I dug up a pet canary that had died and I had wept over and buried most carefully in cotton wool in a Bryant & May's matchbox. I longed to see my little bird once more. I fancy that I had expected to find the box empty, that he had gone to Heaven, or had become a fairy—I never had the courage to tell any one what I saw—the blankness, the misery, of that first sight of decay!

And then there was lying on the hay in the sun, dreaming I was carried away on a cloud to meet somebody who would take me to all the beautiful places in the world.

Strangers terrified me—"the people behind the door." "They did not say what their faces said," was a remark I made

when I was trying to explain my terror to my nurse. True to this day it is, only now their interest lies in the enigma.

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I remember one of the governesses, who

was very kind to me, a gray haired woman, with a small, sad, tight face and an expression that never changed. I asked her if she had a sister and she answered solemnly, "Yes, and her beauty was her curse." This answer filled me with awe, and for a long while gravely troubled me.

About this time my mother took my sisters to Germany to finish their education.

Aunt Kate took a great interest in me. She heard me play the piano and begged my mother to let her take me to Paris and to live with her for a year, and to have lessons in music and French.

My father's financial troubles had completely crippled him, so this chance for me to "finish my education," which indeed had not yet begun, came as a great boon to my mother.

Next week Mrs. Campbell completes the picture of her girlhood and early days and discloses herself as a full fledged "Paula Tanqueray," the envy of theatrical London and well launched upon the extraordinary career to follow.